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Schizaea pusilla in its natural surroundings

R. C. BENEDICT

Schizaea pusilla—sometimes called “curly grass,” is perhaps our most elusive fern. It occurs in only a few very limited regions,—Newfoundland, New Jersey. It is also the most diminutive and least conspicuous of all our ferns. Possibly it is more wide-spread than has been supposed as it might readily escape the notice even of a careful searcher.

The plant shown in the plate was found last July near the Toms River, New Jersey. The species had been found there before, and the writer was guided in his search by the careful directions of one of the earlier visitors to the locality. One discrepancy between the locality as described and as found last summer was discovered when it was found that according to the directions, the route lay through a pond of some acres extent on which no boat was available. As was learned later, this pond is a temporary affair, and is filled or emptied according to the exigencies of cranberry culture.

The important landmark, according to the directions, was a railroad embankment. This was visible the other end of the pond, and was reached finally after a considerable detour. For the benefit of those who may wish to hunt for *Schizaea*, let me describe in some detail the actual surroundings under which it grew at that particular locality.

The pond lay in a hollow only a little lower than the adjoining tract. Along two sides, the ground was at that time very dry and covered with blueberries and scrub oak. Along the railroad embankment, the marginal ground was very moist, with scattered patches of sphag-



SCHIZAEA AT HOME

num. The soil here was sandy. In this section, within a rod of the railroad, *Schizaea* was found. At first, only a very small plant was discovered, later more and larger ones were found. The plant shown in the picture was not the largest clump, but it was of good size, and was in a better position than some for photographing. The plants noted all grew partially shaded. It may be noted in passing that they needed shade. That particular locality must have been about the hottest place in New Jersey and the day in question was the hottest day of last summer. There was a fine breeze, but it came from the other side of the embankment. On the lee side, the sun had full sway and the damp ground almost steamed. The manipulation of a camera is not a cool task on a hot day, especially when the placing of the camera is difficult, and the focusing requires particular care. It was necessary to interrupt the work with frequent trips to the top of the embankment for a breath of less heated air. So much for the general surroundings under which *Schizaea* was found.

One of the best means of finding a particular person or plant is to know the usual associates. The photograph shows two interesting ones, *Drosera rotundifolia*, and *Lycopodium innundatum*. The *Lycopodium* was common but lacked several weeks of maturity. Besides the round-leaved sundew, the larger long-leaved species was also present. Plants of both were numerous. They were just a few days short of being in full flower. In the sunnier spaces, plants of *Pogonia* and *Limodorum* were numerous, mostly with withering flowers. As the picture shows, the *Schizaea* was not entirely unrolled. Probably three weeks were passed before its spores were fully ripened.

Probably *Schizaea* grows in somewhat different situations in some of its other localities. I noted recently a

statement that its habitat was in dried up boggy ground. It was not at all dried up at the Toms River station, last summer, but it is possible that at some periods of the year, the ground there may become dry. From the description given above, it will be noted that the situation was not dissimilar to that required by *Ophioglossum*,—indeed the latter occurred there—and it is not unlikely that careful search in *Ophioglossum* territory may reveal more localities for *Schizaea*.

HIGH SCHOOL OF COMMERCE,
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Ferns of Northern Berkshire County, Mass.

E. J. WINSLOW

The following list is compiled from the results of ten days' collecting in the upper Hoosic valley and surrounding hills with headquarters in the town of Cheshire. One trip was made to a large swamp in Lenox and one to the summit of Mt. Greylock and the Saddleback ridge.

The valley here slopes rather abruptly from the narrow intervals with its occasional swamps and swales to the rich hillside pastures and groves with frequent outcropping ledge, and thence to the forest covered mountain ridges. There is plenty of lime rock of a rather hard crystalline variety, and marble quarrying and lime burning are carried on by the inhabitants to some extent.

This list is necessarily incomplete, and is published in the hope to elicit supplementary records from readers of this JOURNAL who have enjoyed a longer acquaintance with this beautiful region.

Forty-four species of ferns and allies were found common or frequent in suitable localities. Of course not